

Focus 208 – Sue Ann Lindsay

How do I use technology in the classroom in innovative ways.

Technology has become the essence of the photography program at Skyview High School. We have a three-year photography program. During the first year students work with 35mm Single Lens Reflex (SLR) cameras, black and white film, do developing and darkroom printing, and begin using Photoshop, the industry standard photo program to enhance their photos, on computers. During the second year students are introduced to studio photography and begin using medium format cameras and professional digital cameras. They work with Photoshop and InDesign, a layout and design program, on the computers doing assignments in portraiture, landscape, still life advertisements and a major photojournalism article. Third year students, who have a double period and meet for a three-hour block every other day, are very involved in “Real Life” projects using and further developing their skills, such as being on assignment for the yearbook, fulfilling assignments brought to us by other teachers, departments and the public, and the *focus208* project. These students are preparing for a 20 piece portfolio show of their work, which will be displayed at Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) in April. They are also learning to use large format cameras.

The *focus208* project is a wonderful opportunity for our third year students to develop a wide variety of skills which will be used throughout their lives. This project began as a trial project at Capital High School in Boise in the spring of 2004. This year several other schools, including Skyview High School have joined the project. Each student chooses a neighborhood, then as a group, we visit with the Nampa Planning and Zoning Committee to get a feel for the history and development of the city and surrounding area. They learn how the planning is done and some of the future projects that have been proposed. We also visit with the Canyon County Historical Society and the students are able to see how photos and other memorabilia are preserved and archived in the Society. Then each student does research on their area, making contact with Neighborhood presidents and group leaders, setting up interviews to learn the history and other interesting facts about their area. The students take photographs showing the Global Positioning System (GPS) reading of the buildings and of the people in the neighborhood. After all the material is gathered and photos are taken, the students then write out the information and begin the process of editing and condensing the material into copy that can be used on the pages assigned to them in the magazine. They also help design the pages assigned to them. The magazine is printed in the late spring and our students will display their photos in the Boise City Hall and also in the Nampa City Hall. This display becomes a traveling display shown in several venues throughout the valley during the 2005-2006 school year. Finally, our student’s photos will be donated to the archives of the Canyon County Historical Society.

Our photography students use computers, software, film and digital cameras, printers and a photography studio. Technology has become a very important part of the photography business and our program is designed to give our students as much real life experience as I can find. Assignments and projects are designed to help students learn industry standard software and equipment. Our problem, of course, is having enough of the more expensive equipment for the students to use.

How my use of technology in the classroom has impacted student performance.

Four years ago the photography program at Skyview High School was limited to 35mm black and white film. There were only two semesters being offered with plans to add a third semester for those students interested in more training. At that time we surveyed student interest and decided to develop a three-year program that would include yearlong classes. We realized that with the increasing use of digital cameras and the whole technology involved with them, we needed to adjust our curriculum to prepare our students for the photography world they would be entering.

This is the third year we have had a full three-year program. We now have computers, software, a studio, medium and large format film cameras and a few SLR digital cameras. The students learn how to use the software programs Photoshop and InDesign to work with their photos and do layout for projects.

The quality of student work has changed a lot with the use of digital SLR cameras. The immediate feed back with digital imaging allows the students to see what they have captured, then make appropriate adjustments as they are shooting. Their understanding of apertures and shutter speeds is greatly increased, giving them much more control of their images because of a greater understanding of how the image is affected with these controls.

Using digital SLR cameras has also helped in their work in the studio. Students work with portraiture and still-life. They learn posing, lighting, lighting ratios, apertures and shutter speeds. Again, using the SLR digital cameras allows them instant feedback so that touch up work on the computers can be kept to a minimum and they know whether their shot is what they want before the subject leaves.

It takes a lot of practice time to master an SLR digital camera with its accessories. We do not have enough cameras to go around for the number of students that we serve. We are now sharing 4 SLR digital cameras between thirty 2nd and 3rd -year students. Waiting to use a camera discourages students and slows the learning process.

A budget narrative of what I am proposing to purchase for use in the classroom.

This request is for: 1) 4 Nikon D70 SLR digital camera outfits with the accessories to make optimum use of the camera; 2) 10 microcassette recorders to be used in interviews for the *focus208* project; 3) printing costs for the *focus208* magazines; and 4) print and display costs for the photos that will be displayed.

The Nikon D70 SLR digital camera outfit consists of the camera body and an 18-70mm zoom lens. The accessories include an additional 70-300mm zoom lens to allow photo coverage from wide angle to telephoto. We use all of these focal lengths with the various assignments the students receive. Other accessories are a Nikon SB800 flash unit, a 512MB Ultra CompactFlash memory card, a replacement Li-Ion battery and a camera bag. Experience has shown that these are the accessories that we most frequently use with each camera.

The ten microcassette recorders will be used in the interview process as the students gather information for their articles. This will help insure accuracy in their reporting and allow them to be more relaxed during the interview process. They will still be required to take written notes, but they will know that they have a backup to help do a more in-depth job. As they begin to write their copy, they will be able to review the interview, listen for inflections and be sure that they are reporting exactly what has been said. They must have permission from the interviewee to use the recorder.

The magazine printing costs are for our part of the larger area magazine which will include articles from three Boise schools, two Meridian schools and Skyview High School, and the cost of printing a separate Nampa area magazine. We have gotten a good bid for our Nampa magazine. Copies of this magazine will be given to the Nampa Planning and Zoning Committee, the Canyon County Historical Society, select local businesses and to the students as a record of their work.

The photo printing and display costs are for printing their photos and buying frames and mats for display. Each student will print two copies of five photos for display. These ten photos will need to be matted and framed. One set will be in the main display, which will be at City Hall in Boise. This display will then travel to different venues throughout the 2005-2006 school year. The other set will be at City Hall in Nampa, then these photos will be displayed at various businesses in Nampa and next spring will be donated to the Canyon County Historical Society, which is very excited about this project and that receiving these photos for the archives. The frames will be reused next year.

How what I am proposing to purchase will enhance my teaching in the classroom.

I use technology to teach every day. I use computers, cameras, studio lighting, printers, and projectors. The goal for the photography program is to provide students the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to work with photography. Digital photography is becoming the standard and digital SLR cameras are used in every facet of photography. Whether our students decide that photography will be their career or they want to be able to take excellent family photos, these are skills the students will use for the rest of their lives.

I use the equipment we have to teach the skills they need. Every project or assignment given in the photography classes is designed to give them these skills. The digital SLR cameras are used by second- and third-year students on a regular basis for a wide variety of assignments. They are used in the studio, for yearbook photo assignments, location assignments, and various assignments for their final portfolios. They are taught how the camera functions, the menu options, aperture and shutter speed settings and their uses, downloading options, photo enhancement using Photoshop software, layout and copy writing skills using InDesign, and output or printing options. It is important for each student to be able to work with a camera on a regular basis to be able to master these skills. When students are shown how the functions work and then they have to wait for an extended period of time before they can actually use the camera, it is discouraging. It makes my job more difficult, because I have to re-teach as each student gets access to a camera and they forget before they can use it again. There is so much to learn and this is not a very efficient way to teach. It is the practice that helps students master the information and techniques they have been taught. Also, scheduling student camera use is difficult.

The *focus208* project is a good example of the skills I teach my students. I teach the students how to use the cameras, how to use Photoshop and InDesign software, and interviewing, research, and design skills. In the studio, students learn about lighting, posing, digital cameras, downloading, and Photoshop. Interviewing skills are taught and practiced. Students who are learning to interview and write about what they heard often miss important information. Having a tape recorder would make it much easier to write an accurate account.